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A
Word in Season.
BEING A
CAUTION
Against the
AWFUL DELUSIONS
OF THE
PERFECTIONISTS.

Humbly addressed to the Followers of the
Lamb.

If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the
Truth is not in us. 1 JOHN i. 8.



L O N D O N:

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A

Word in Season, &c.

My Christian Brethren,

YE Soldiers of Jesus Christ, who are called to fight the good Fight of Faith, suffer me to sound an Alarm in your Camp: Danger is near: Be on your Guard. The Enemy approaches: Stand to your Arms. He has gained Ground and prevailed over some of your professed Brethren. Some are deceived by his Craft, and are fallen into his deceitful Snares. Be not ye ignorant of his Devices. Beware of the subtle Wiles of the Enemy of Truth. When he tempts to Antinomian Licentiousness, he appears as the Prince of Darkness, and you may discover his cloven Foot: But now, he transforms himself into an Angel of Light, and deceives and beguiles under the specious Pretence of SINLESS PERFECTION. Hence poor Sinners are deceived into a vain unscriptural Notion, that Sin is all destroyed, their Foes all vanquished, the Battle is over, and they have gained a complete Victory; so that the Fight of Faith is at an End, and you may now safely lay down your Arms.

Oh! my Friends, as soon believe the Devil himself is dead, as be persuaded, that Sin is all destroyed in you; or that you are so perfect, as that Sin doth not dwell in your mortal Bodies. Tremble at the Thought. It is false and unscriptural. Fly the Delusion. It is the Spawn of pharisaic Pride and self-righteous Arrogance. Attend to the awful Instances of this dangerous

ous Deceit, which we have seen in this our Day; and then judge, my Friends, if ye have not the utmost Need to take the wholesome Advice of the Apostle: *Put on the whole Armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil. Hold fast the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD.* Learn ye well to wield this spiritual Weapon: so shall ye be safe, under the Captain of your Salvation, against both the violent Attacks and artful Seductions of your spiritual Enemies.

It is not many Months since the following melancholy Affair happened to a Person who was deceived into the awful Delusion of *sinless Perfection*. He attended Preaching, where this unscriptural Notion is taught and insisted on, and he imagined he had attained it; and with Confidence declared that he was pure and holy and free from Sin, free from the least Spot or Defilement of Corruption; that he had lived some Time in this State, without committing Sin, in Thought, Word or Deed: And this Man was very consistent, (much more so than those who pretend to this State, and allow they shall die) for he openly declared, that he was not mortal like other Men, like other poor Sinners. He asserted, he should never die; but that his Body would be changed, and become spiritual and transparent. But how ended his Delusion? what was the Consequence of this poor Mad-man's golden Dream? Awful and alarming! One Day, as he was in his Garden, he came into his House and said, He had received a Blow from an invisible Hand, on one Side of his Face, which presently swelled; and he did not long after this retain his Reason, but fell into the most deplorable State, sometimes barking like a Dog, and belching out the most horrid Oaths and dreadful Blasphemies; in his Countenance he appeared with all the Craft and Malice of the most enraged Enemy, against all who came to visit him; and in this miserable Condition he continued some Time and died. Shocking and terrifying! A Warning this, one would have thought, to his deluded Brethren; sufficient to undeceive them in their vain Pretensions. But alas

had not this Effect. For instead of being open to Conviction, they endeavoured to stifle the Affair, and gave out the false Report, that "he came to his Senses, and died very happy :—" But the contrary is asserted from good Authority.

Such was the End, the melancholy and affecting End of this Person's vain Boasting and unscriptural Delusions, concerning SINLESS PERFECTION. Yet his perfect Brethren still persisted in their Notions, and held their public Meetings at one Place and another, where one Mr. *Bell* used to exhibit. This poor deluded Man pretended to the Discernment of Spirits, pronouncing what passed upon the Souls of the People present, under the Influence of the Holy Spirit; what particular Blessings were that Moment gone forth from God to such and such a Soul. And so great was his pretended Familiarity and Intercourse with the Deity, that I have heard him frequently declare, "God himself hath told me so and so." Yea, to such horrid Lengths have these Persons been carried, as publicly to appeal to God himself in (what they call) Prayer, for the Truth of this blasphemous Delusion, that they are *as just, as holy, as righteous, and as pure as GOD HIMSELF*. What Wonder when Persons are thus deceived in their Judgment of themselves, that the Enemy should delude them, to set up Imaginations for Revelations, and pretend to foretel future Events? This is notorious. The 28th Day of *February* last was fixed by them for the general Destruction and total Overthrow of the Nations of the World, and the Coming of our Saviour. This they pretended was revealed to them by God himself; and I have been credibly informed, near a Hundred pretended to have this Matter made clear to them; some in one Way and some in another, by Voices, Sights, Impressions, &c.

Well, the Day foretold being come, in the Evening of the 28th of *February*, some of these deluded Persons met in *Snowfield's Chapel*, to wait the Event, and expect the Fulfilment of their Prediction.—But Time, that grand Discoverer of the Truth or Falsity of such Prophecies, gave full Proof of their foolish Errors and mad Delusions,

sions. The fixed solemn Hour of Twelve approached, and they broke off their Exercises of Singing and Prayer in silent Sadness, and retired in Perplexity of Mind and Distress of Spirit.

And now, after being thus deluded to believe a Lie, is it any Marvel if the Enemy is taking a direct contrary Method, and endeavours to persuade them to reject God's Word, and to disbelieve even the Truths of the Gospel, and to deny all Experience of the Life and Power of Christianity on the Soul, as meer Fancy and Delusion? And in Truth, this I am well informed is the Case, at least with some of these Persons. But, my Friends, let us not insult, but pity them; let us not triumph over them because they are fallen, but pray to *him* who hath Compassion on them that are out of the Way, for them; for they may be sincere, though deceived; they may be well-meaning, though they have been taken captive by the Enemy. The Lord recover them out of his Snare, and by their Harm teach us Wisdom! But whence sprang their Delusion? What the first Cause of it? Pride; not thinking soberly, but thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think; being lifted up with Pride, they have fallen under the Delusions of the Enemy. Thus in the Beginning, the Suggestion of the Enemy, YE SHALL BE AS GODS, proved Man's Fall and Overthrow: So now, the Source and Spring of this present Delusion, is the Notion of SINLESS PERFECTION. This unscriptural Doctrine, it is well known hath been taught among us for many Years, and this State of *sinless Perfection*, insisted upon as attainable in this Life. We have now seen the woful Effects of it. And oh, into what Lying, Blasphemy and Delusion have these poor Souls fallen! But is it any Wonder that Persons of weak Heads and warm Imaginations, who are governed more by *Fancy* and *Feeling* than the Word of God, should be thus deluded? For if Professors are taught and do really believe this State attainable, *Despair* or *Presumption* will be the unavoidable Consequence. The Honest and Sincere, will be in continual Distress, knowing they have not attained it. While the Bold and Presumptuous will be deluded with

with a vain Notion that they do enjoy this sinless State. But, my Friends, when you meet with such pretended Angels in Flesh, such Doves without Gall, such *perfect* People, be assured you see Persons *perfectly* deluded; for they have lost Sight of themselves, and know not their true Character; they fancy they are not Sinners, therefore they have no Need of Jesus our Saviour; they want not the precious Blood of Christ to cleanse them from Sin, for they have no Sin; they need not the Righteousness of Christ to be imputed for Justification, for they have a *perfect inherent* one of their own; they want not the Mediation and Intercession of Christ before the Throne, for a *perfect* Creature can have an immediate Access to a perfect God. And what have such to do with *Faith*, living by Faith on the Son of God, who have such *Fulness of Perfection* in themselves? Take Heed such deceive you not, by their specious Pretences, Shew and Appearance. By the Word of God try the Spirits. You no where find in the sacred Oracles, of any one, either of the Prophets, Apostles, or Saints of God, who ever pretended to a State of Freedom from Sin in this Life, or such a Perfection as many now boast of. No, quite the reverse. Not one Text can be brought to prove such a State; but many to the contrary. But really, it is strange and shocking to observe, what Arts, Quibbles and Evasions, these Persons have recourse to, in order to maintain and support this golden Dream of Folly and Madness, SINLESS PERFECTION. As a flagrant Instance of this, see a Reply to those excellent Queries, offered to those who profess *sinless Perfection*, by a faithful and judicious Minister of Christ, and his Rejoinder. The scriptural, rational, experienced Christian, may easily detect and discover, that the vain Pretensions to *sinless Perfection*, have their Rise from these three Things. 1. From a Blindness to, and Ignorance of what the Christian is, considered in himself, even after Regeneration and Conversion. 2. Not knowing nor allowing the Purity, Spirituality of the Law of God, and that Perfection it requires. And, 3. Like the *Papists*, giving soft Appellations to Sin, calling it *infirmities*, and deeming it meetly venial and trifling. And

And I may add, lest the testified Experience of a holy Apostle should militate against this favourite Notion, Paul himself must be made out both a Liar and a Deceiver, in his 7th Chap. to the *Romans*: for, says he, *with the Mind, I myself serve the Law of GOD, but with my Flesh [I serve] the Law of Sin.* But say the *Perfectionists*, Paul spake not this of himself, but of another Person; or, if of himself, it was while he was in an unconverted Estate. But the Man who will assert this, must first have shook Hands with Truth and common Sense; for it is contrary to both. To Truth: Can an unconverted Person serve the Law of GOD with his Mind? To common Sense: Can *I myself*, be understood to mean another Person? Truth wants no such Arts and Evasions; it seeks them not. When they are used, it can be to no good End. That Christian, who by Faith understands and knows the Fulness of that Salvation which is in Christ Jesus, is not afraid to see and own the Misery and Ruins of the Fall, knowing that where Sin hath abounded, Grace doth much more abound; that as Sin hath reigned unto Death, Grace reigns through Righteousness unto eternal Life by Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 21. This is the Foundation of every true Believer's Hope. He rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no Confidence in the Flesh. He builds upon the free Grace of GOD, and the Righteousness of Jesus Christ; through which the divine Spirit is poured from on High to sanctify him. And every Believer in Jesus is sanctified. There is not an *unholy* Believer, nor a *sinless* Believer on Earth.

Reader, if thou believest in Jesus with thy Heart, thou art called to be holy in all Manner of Conversation; to bring forth the Fruits of Holiness in thy Life. And thou dost love the Way of Holiness, and delight in it after the inward Man: being renewed in the Spirit of thy Mind, thou wilt go on perfecting Holiness, This is the Will of thy Saviour. And thou lovest him, and lovest his Will and his Way, because he hath redeemed thee with his Blood, justified thee by his Righteousness, and sanctified thee by his Spirit. The more thou knowest of thy Sanctification, the more it will humble thee. They who attain most, think least of
their

their Attainments. They see so much Evil in their Nature, and so much Good before them, that they will be still pressing forward after Holiness to the End of their Days. If any one thinks he is *perfect, and without Sin*, we may not only justly question the Truth of his Pretence, but also his having any Holiness at all. For the Heart and Soul of every true Believer is created anew by the Spirit of Christ, whereby he hath a holy Hatred of all Sin, and a Loathing of himself in whom Sin still remains, and a Pressing after Perfection in Holiness; which he shall most certainly enjoy, when he is, where Christ is.

Little Children, abide in Christ. Let no Man deceive you with vain Words. O beware, beware of such Tenets which strike at the Sovereignty of God, oppose the Doctrine of free Grace, and the imputed Righteousness of Christ; and instead thereof, tend to establish FREE-WILL, and inherent SINLESS PERFECTION: which Notions as they are founded in PRIDE, and DELUSION, lead to INFIDELITY, LICENTIOUSNESS and ANTINOMIANISM, and will end in the most awful Consequences — from which, *Jesus Master, save us!*



F I N I S.

